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STATE FOR WHA/BSC, WHA/EPSC AND OES/IHB
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SUBJECT: CHILE HAS 168 CONFIRMED H1N1 CASES; ALL BUT ONE IS MILD

REFS: (A) Santiago 487; (B) Santiago 470; (C) Santiago 411; (C)
Santiago 402

¶1. According to the Ministry of Health's website (www.minsal.cl), as of May 27, Chile has 168 cases of H1N1 influenza. There have been no H1N1-related deaths. Although H1N1 has spread outside the metropolitan Santiago region, many of the cases are mild.

168 CONFIRMED CASES OF H1N1; ONLY ONE IS SEVERE

¶2. The Institute of Public Health has confirmed 168 cases of influenza A-H1N1 throughout Chile. The Ministry of Health (MOH) website continues to report that although most patients have mild symptoms there is at least one case with more severe symptoms. The press reports that the serious case concerns a woman who was on an extremely restricted calorie diet and is now hospitalized with respiratory failure.

NEW STRATEGY FOCUS ON AT-RISK POPULATION

¶3. As of June 1, the GOC is changing its strategy to combat H1N1. In addition to focusing treatment on more severe cases, priority will be given to treating people with risk factors, i.e., patients with cardiovascular disease, carriers of chronic diseases, people with immune diseases related to diabetes or metabolic disorders, pregnant women and children under 15 years old.

EMBASSY EMPLOYEES WITH DIRECT CONTACT TO H1N1 CASES

¶4. Over the past week, several Embassy staff have reported direct contact with confirmed H1N1 cases, mostly through their children. The employees have all sought appropriate medical assistance and have been advised to stay home from work for 7 days as a preventative measure.

FLU SEASON IN CHILE; NUMBER OF CASES EXPECTED TO RISE

¶5. This is the beginning of flu season in South America and, although the rate of influenza infection in Chile is currently lower than in previous years, the number of cases is expected to rise significantly in the coming weeks. Post's H1N1 taskforce will continue to meet provide updates to the Department, as needed.
SIMONS